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# CONTENTS

	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>1. Purpose of the Statement</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Vision and Strategic Context</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Resourcing the Scheme</b>	<b>6</b>
Table 1. Assistance Available for home owners and private sector landlords and tenants	<b>7</b>
<b>4. Part 1. Adaptation of Properties</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5. Financial Assistance for Adaptations</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>6. Part 2. Improving Property Condition</b>	<b>10</b>
6.1 Information and Advice	10
6.2 Practical Assistance	10
6.3 Discretionary Financial Assistance	11
Table 2. Repair Grants 2015-16	12
<b>7. Statutory Action, Enforcement and Default</b>	<b>13</b>
7.1 Policy for Identifying Housing Renewal Areas	13 11

## 1. PURPOSE OF THE STATEMENT

on how to improve the quality and suitability of private sector housing across Argyll and Bute.

Section 72 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 requires a local authority to prepare and make publicly available a Scheme of Assistance for private sector housing.

The guiding principles for this revision remain the same as for our previous statement in 2010 i.e. those expressed in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 and accompanying guidance that:

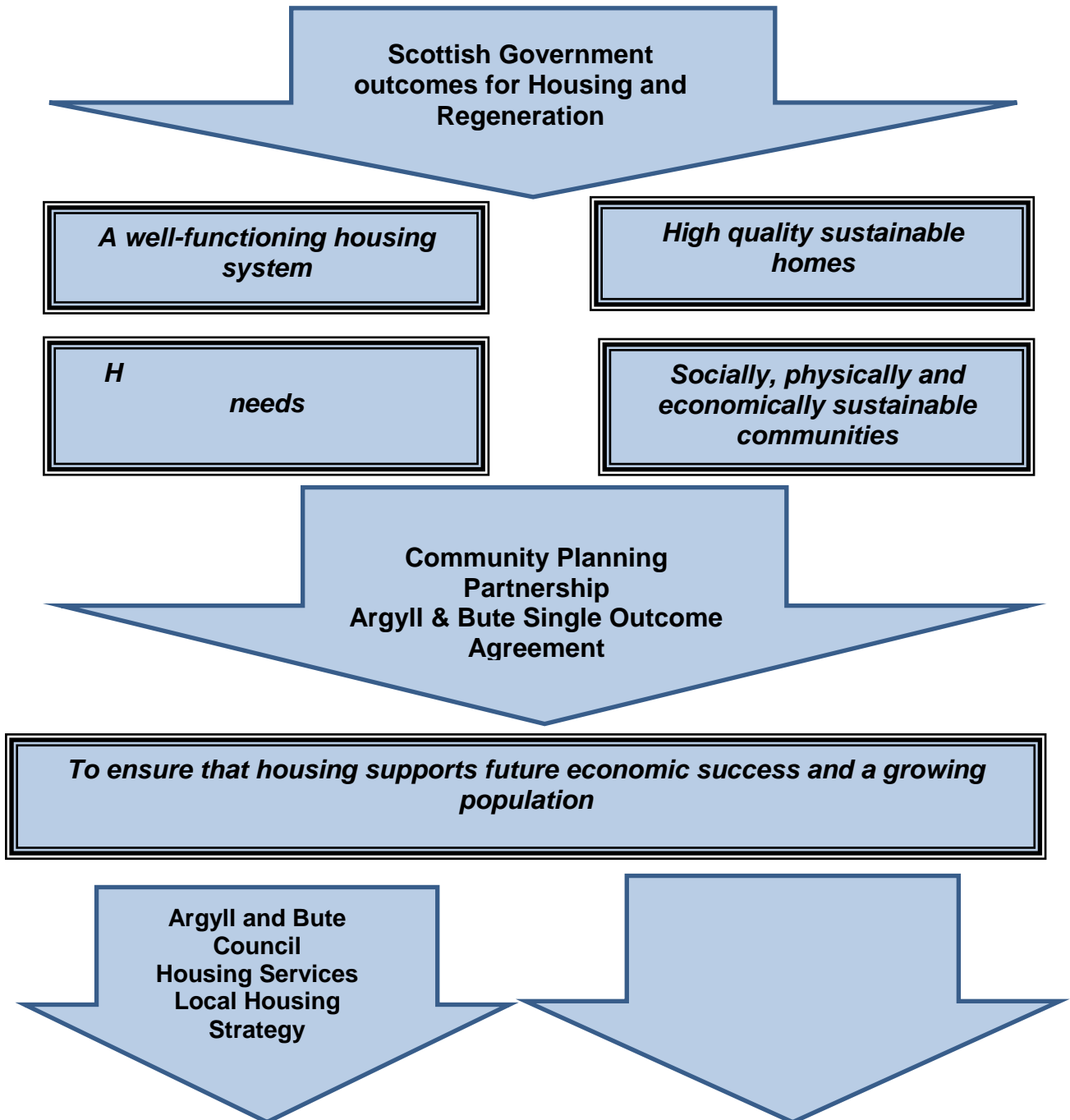
- “ Grant assistance should be primarily directed at needs assessed adaptations to enable disabled persons to remain in their own homes
- “ Owners of private dwelling houses are responsible for the maintenance and repair of their own properties
- “ Information, advice and practical assistance should be the first step in an assessment process for disabled persons who have not in the past had contact
- “ The use of grant for the general subsidisation of repair and improvement works by owners is generally discouraged.

This revised statement also takes account of The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 (the Act) which requires Health Boards and Local Authorities to integrate planning for, and delivery of, certain adult health and social care services. Where services are delegated to Integration Authorities: -

- “ Section 71 (1) (b) Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 (assistance for housing purposes) only in so far as it relates to an aid or adaptation.
- “ Section 92 Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (assistance for housing purposes) on housing

## 2. VISION & STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This Scheme of Assistance, both Parts 1 and Part 2, sit within a hierarchy of aims and objectives at both national and local level.



The Scheme is set out in two parts and both parts are designed to meet its overall aims:

**PART 1.** To meet the assessed needs of people with long term life limiting conditions, who are living in the private sector and require adaptations to allow them to live in their homes as independently as possible for as long as they choose to do so, and

**PART 2.** To address disrepair in private sector homes by encouraging home owners to recognise that they have the primary responsibility for maintaining their properties. Limited resources will be targeted at properties where there are common repair responsibilities and empty homes.

At a local level the Scheme of Assistance contributes to the following outcomes set in the Argyll and Bute Local Housing Strategy 2011-16

- “ To lead a cultural change in attitudes to private sector house conditions
- “ To effectively deal with large numbers of sub-standard houses of all types and in all locations
- “ To provide support and assistance, including financial assistance,
- “ To realise the potential of communities. by ensuring that people have access to affordable, sufficient and suitable housing

These aims will be achieved by offering the following types of assistance:

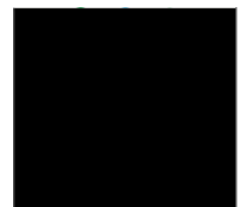
We will ensure that advice and information on home repairs, maintenance, improvements and adaptations is available to any private housing sector

#### **Practical Assistance**

We will provide, along with key partners, a range of services which offer practical help relating to the repair and maintenance of homes in the private sector, and

#### **Financial Assistance**

Mandatory financial assistance will be provided to cover some (or all) of the costs of eligible disabled adaptations to private properties. Discretionary financial assistance may be provided to improve the condition of residential property in circumstances set out in section 6.



### 3. RESOURCING THE SCHEME

The scheme will be managed by the Housing team at the Health and Social Care Integrated Board for Part 1 and to the Council for Part 2. Incorporated within Part 1 will be the management of the contract for Argyll and Bute Care and Repair Services relating to adaptations. The Housing team has staff appointed to act as specialist advisors on a range of housing options including the provision of information and advice to home owners and the private rented sector.

Information and advice is delivered along with the following key partners in their relevant area of expertise.

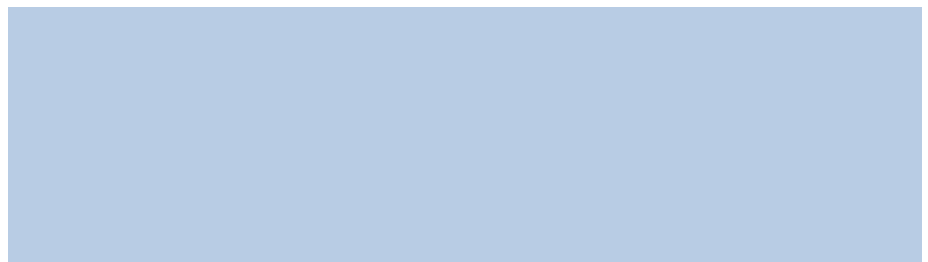
**x**



## **4. PART 1. ADAPTATION OF PROPERTIES**

This section outlines the services that are available to people living in the private sector that may need an adaptation within their home. The Health and Social Care Integrated Body has a responsibility to assess a person's needs and to arrange appropriate services and adaptations. However, as funds are limited, we need to ensure that we work with people in the greatest need. To assist us to do this we have developed an assessment process and associated eligibility criteria.





## 6. PART 2. IMPROVING PROPERTY CONDITION

### 6.1 INFORMATION AND ADVICE

A key aim of the scheme is to encourage home owners to act responsibly and to plan for the maintenance and upkeep of their property.

The provision of high quality information and advice for householders is fundamental to this approach and is available in a range of formats. There is also a range of communication methods adopted to try to maximise access to information and advice:

- Online via the Council website including wider Housing Options advice and links to national information resources

- Widely distributed information leaflets

- Maintenance events

- A wide range of third sector advice and service organisations co-ordinate their work with the Council through the Argyll & Bute Advice Network (ABAN).

Through the ABAN referral system clients can be signposted to other agencies which may be able to assist.

### 6.2 PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE

#### 6.2.1 COMMON REPAIRS

If work is required to the common parts of building, all the owners who share responsibility for the maintenance and repair of the building need to work together. It is recognised that reaching agreement can present difficulties and the Housing Service will provide impartial advice and support to establish owners associations to deal with these matters.

Mediation Services can also be provided. This is an informal way of resolving disputes between households or between landlords and tenants. Argyll and Bute Mediation Service will help those involved in a dispute to come to agreement. The service is free of charge and it does not prevent owners or tenants seeking advice from other agencies or prevent legal action being taken if necessary.

#### 6.2.2 EMPTY HOMES

Utilising empty property to meet housing needs is a key part of the rational and economical use of the existing stock. The Council is keen to encourage the re-use of empty homes to meet housing needs and this is reflected in this scheme of assistance. The Council has a dedicated Empty Homes Officer. Lessons learned in the first two years of the Empty Homes initiative have shown that there would be benefit in the introduction of a simpler model which does not require an RSL partner and does not require 5 or 10 year commitment from an owner. Consequently an additional empty home grant has been introduced which will make the refurbishment of long term empty property an option for households moving from the social rented

### **6.3 DISCRETIONARY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

There are currently grants available to assist owners to improve property condition. Primarily these are targeted at property in common ownership and empty property to incentivize multi- owner action and catalyse town centre tenement regeneration. These discretionary grants are used to complement other grant funded schemes such as THI, CARS and HEEPS:ABS. All grants to assist owners to improve property are discretionary and will be dependent on the resources available.

Grant assistance is considered for works of common repair in tenement, and within the tenement stock will be targeted at larger buildings where several owners and major works justify financial assistance. Smaller tenements, for example split villas will be of lesser priority.

Although this Scheme of Assistance sets out the availability of grant for repair work the application and assessment process will reflect the guidance. For further and more

## **Table2. Repair Grants**

### **Repair Grant Type 1**

Discretionary grant for preparatory information and advice for tenements

### **Tenement Feasibility Study**

To assist owners in sub-standard tenement buildings to appoint professional advisors to prepare condition reports, feasibility studies and other pre-project planning work;

- a. Grant of up to £250 per unit of shared costs.

### **Repair Grant Type 2**

Discretionary grant for

### **Common Repair Grant**

## 7. Statutory Action, Enforcement and Default

The service of orders and notices is the first stage of a discretionary process which **may or may not** lead to works being carried out by the Council. Argyll & Bute Council will always strive to work with owners to find solutions to housing problems.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 includes various statutory powers that the Council may use where it is apparent that owners are failing to maintain or repair their properties. In addition powers remain from the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.

Housing (Scotland) Act 2006	Section 1	Housing Renewal Area
Housing (Scotland) Act 2006	Section 30	Work Notice
Housing (Scotland) Act 2006	Section 33	Demolition Notice
Housing (Scotland) Act 2006	Section 42	Maintenance Order
Housing (Scotland) Act 1987	Section 114	Closing Order
Housing (Scotland) Act 1987	Section 115	Demolition Order

### 7.1 Policy for Identifying Housing Renewal Areas

There are no current intentions to utilise powers for Housing Renewal Areas (HRA). The profile of housing disrepair in Argyll & Bute is such that sub-standard homes are distributed across the whole stock and in all areas. In most cases, including tenemental projects, working with small numbers of owners taking ownership of their own housing

### 7.3 Demolition and Closing Orders

Demolition and closing orders are served under Part VI of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987. Both are discretionary and may be served when a house is below the tolerable standard for housing (BTS) and *ought to be demolished*.

Closing orders are served on houses which cannot be demolished because

- they are part of a building containing other houses which do not fail the tolerable standard.

- they are part of a building containing property other than houses

- they are subject to listing or preservation orders

otherwise demolition orders are served.

Once served the orders prevent occupation and remain in force until the house is either demolished or brought up to the tolerable standard.

Closing and demolition orders give full exemption from council tax.

Demolition and closing orders create empty homes with full exemption from council tax and as such are contrary to the Councils agreed policies on empty homes. There will



## **9. Appendices**

[Appendix I Assessment of Living Accommodation Extensions](#)



C. Any other significant income (an amount less than £1000 is unlikely to make a difference to this estimate) £

D. Total income: A+B+C £

E. Mortgage or rent payments	£
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F. Allowances: £

£2444 for each child who was under 16 or under 21 and in full-time education for the whole year

£2184 for each child who was registered blind or receiving DLA for the whole year

£1820 if you are registered blind or disabled and single

**Total applicable income**

**Grant (percentage of cost)**

£0 to £5,800

80%

£5,801 - £7,000

Between 75% and 70%

£7001 to £10,000

Between 70% and 60%

£10,001 to £13,000

Between 60% and 50%

£13,001 to £16,000

Between 50% and 40%

£16,001 to £19,000

Between 40% and 30%

£19,001 to £24,000

Between 30% and 20%

£24,001 to £32,000

Between 20% and 10%

Over £32,000

no grant

£2600 if you have a partner and you and/or they are registered blind or disabled

G. Total deductions: E+F	£
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H. Total applicable income: D-G	£
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## Appendix III Empty Homes Funding

Utilising empty property to meet housing needs is a key part of the rational and economical use of the existing stock. The Council is keen to encourage the re-use of empty homes to meet housing needs and this is reflected in this Scheme of Assistance.

**Registered Social Landlords (RSL) Where** a RSL is willing to take on the lease of an

Appendix IV Assessment Matrix for Closing and Demolition Orders

**CLOSING AND DEMOLITION ORDERS**

Housing Issues

Risk Factors

Higher probability of service

## Appendix V Assessment Matrix for Enforcement of Works Notices

<b>WORK NOTICES</b>		
	Improvements to Housing	Risk Factors
Higher probability of enforcement	Common repair responsibilities	
	Serious housing quality failures being remedied or avoided	
	<i>Structural instability</i>	
	<i>Considerable dampness</i>	
	<i>Public safety</i>	
	Part of SHQS programme and Serious failure of SHQS	
	Urgent repair needs	
	Part of a wider regeneration project THI, CARS	
	Majority of tenement units housing	